



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SDNG TO SUPPORT 58TH PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

The South Dakota National Guard will send more than 150 soldiers and airmen to provide support to the 58th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20.

They will join hundreds of National Guardsmen from 35 other states to assist the District of Columbia National Guard and federal and local law enforcement agencies in providing security, crowd control and traffic management of attendees and support personnel throughout the U.S. Capitol region.

The soldiers and airmen are expected to be in the D.C. area for about a week to ensure safe and secure movement of civilians prior to, during and after inauguration events and activities.

The inauguration event will be supported by service members from the Rapid City and Sioux Falls-based 235th Military Police Company, the Sioux Falls-based 114th Security Forces Squadron, one public affairs support specialist from the 114th Fighter Wing, and several medical support personnel from the Rapid City-based 82nd Civil Support Team and 109th Regional Support Group.



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VETERANS COUNCIL SEEKS PARTNERS TO GROW NURSING CARE FOR VETERANS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the South Dakota Veterans Council recently met with healthcare leaders to discuss long term care options for veterans in eastern South Dakota. The Council is in the process of studying the number of certified VA beds in eastern South Dakota, aging veteran population and disabilities.



QUILTS TO KEEP OUR VETERANS WARM

Mrs. Elaine Coonrod from Winner hand delivered 30 large quilts to our heroes at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. She made all the quilts to show her appreciation and gratitude to all the veterans for their sacrifices to this country. Elaine handed out the quilts personally to the residents.

It's been said that one yard of fabric, like one cookie, is never enough! A big "thanks" to Elaine for sharing her talents with our heroes.



Quilts (by Shirley Thomas)

In this special quilt memories play a part,
In putting it together so it warms your heart.
Each little block has a story to tell,
And with just a glimpse you'll recall it well.
So as the memories flow, wrap it around snug,
And close your eyes tight for a big heartfelt hug!



VETERANS SUICIDE CRISIS LINE LEGISLATION AWAITING THE PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE

U.S. Sen. John Thune and U.S. Rep. David Young (Iowa) applauded the Senate's passage of the No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act, legislation first introduced and passed in the House of Representatives earlier this year. The bill seeks to address shortcomings in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) that were identified by the VA Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent and now heads to the president for his signature.

"The Veterans Crisis Line is a critical lifeline for the military men and women who return home from combat, oftentimes having to cope with the invisible wounds of war," said Thune. "When our heroes need someone to reach out to, the least we can do is ensure there's someone available to answer their call. I want to thank Rep. Young for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to the president signing our bill without delay."

"Our veterans make tremendous sacrifices in defense of our freedoms and liberties, and when a veteran is in crisis, they deserve our full support, no exceptions," said Young. "Problems with the Veterans Crisis Line are simply unacceptable, and this legislation seeks to fix this critical mental health tool, to support our returning heroes. I appreciate the unanimous support this legislation has received from my colleagues in both the House and the Senate, and I hope upon reaching the president's desk, this bill will be quickly signed into law."

The Young-Thune bill would improve the VCL by developing a documented process that would improve

its responsiveness and performance. The bill would also require the VA to develop a plan that would ensure every phone call, text message, email, or other form of communication received by the VCL and its backup centers is answered by a live person.

In July 2007, the VA's Suicide Prevention Program started the VCL as a telephone suicide crisis hotline for veterans, families of veterans, and military personnel. The VA's goal is to answer 90 percent of VCL calls within 30 seconds. However, a recent GAO report found that during a five-month review in fiscal year 2015, some calls weren't routed to VCL backup call centers until after 60 seconds. A secret GAO review also found the VCL's text messaging services left more than 25 percent of text messages without a response.



PROFILE OF U.S. VETERANS IS CHANGING DRAMATICALLY AS THEIR RANKS DECLINE

The U.S. is in the midst of a significant long-term shift in both the size and profile of its veteran population. The share of the population with military experience – counting those who are on active duty or were in the past – has fallen by more than half since 1980. Then, 18% of adults were serving or had served in the military. By 2014, the share had declined to 8%, according to Census Bureau data, with an additional 1% serving in the reserves. Among U.S. men, the decline was even more dramatic, dropping from 45% in 1960 to 37% in 1980 and 16% in 2014.

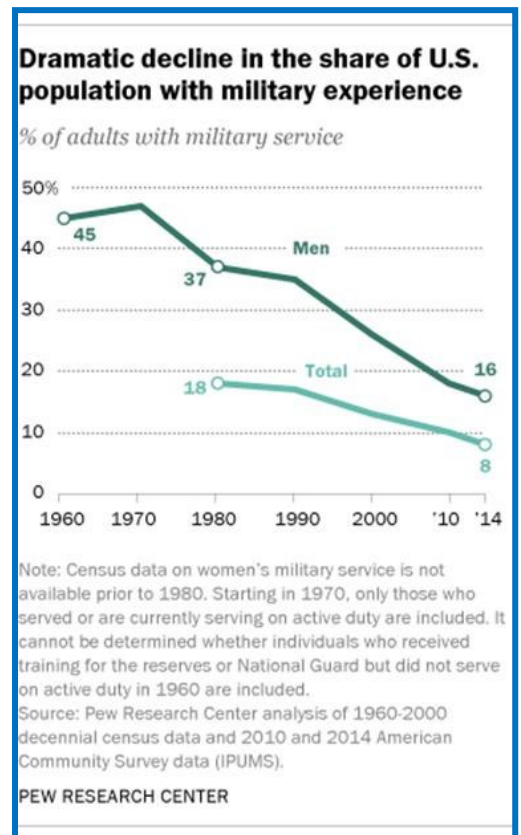
The number of people currently on active duty has also dropped significantly in the past half-century, falling from 3.1 million in 1966 – during the military draft era – to 1.3 million in today's all-voluntary force, less than 1% of all U.S. adults. However, the decline in the share of the population with military experience has been driven primarily by the shrinking number of U.S. veterans as many pass away. In 1980, 18% of U.S. adults were veterans, compared with 8% in 2014, according to census data.

About 7 million (32%) of the 22 million living veterans in 2013 served during the Vietnam War era, according to data from the Veterans Administration (VA). An additional 30% served during the Gulf War era, but far smaller shares of living veterans served during the Korean War (9%) or World War II (5%).

In the years to come, the profile of veterans will continue to shift. VA projections suggest that by 2043, the total number of U.S. veterans will have dropped to about 14.5 million. By that time, most of those who served in the Vietnam era and earlier will have died. Gulf War-era veterans will likely comprise the majority of all vets, based upon the VA model, while those who served since the Gulf War are projected to account for a quarter of the veteran population.

The demographic profile of veterans is also expected to change in the coming decades, reflecting the shifting demographic profile of the military in general. Between 2013 and 2043, the share of all veterans who are women will almost double, from 9% up to 17%, according to VA projections. At the same time, the share ages 50 to 69 is expected to shrink from 42% to 34%, while the share ages 70 or older is expected to rise from 30% to 36%. Mirroring trends in the overall U.S. population, the veteran population is predicted to become more racially and ethnically diverse, as well. Between 2013 and 2043, the share of non-Hispanic white veterans is projected to fall from 78% to 64%, while the share of Hispanic vets will likely double, from 7% to 14%.

Despite the declining presence of veterans in the U.S., many Americans still have close connections with people who have served in the military. A 2011 Pew Research Center survey found that 61% of Americans had an immediate family member who served. However, this closeness to military personnel is fading among younger people. For instance, while about eight-in-ten adults (79%) ages 50 to 64 reported having an immediate family member who served, just one-third of those ages 18 to 29 said the same. (Story provided by Gretchen Livingstone of Pew Research.)



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA PROGRAM SET

The South Dakota Funeral Directors Association will again participate in Wreaths Across America, a national program which pays tribute to fallen veterans of all wars during the Christmas season. A formal wreath presentation will be held at the Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial on Capitol Lake in Pierre at 11:00 AM on Monday, December 12, 2016.

The Wreaths Across America story began in 1992 when businessman Morrill Worcester of the Worcester Wreath Company, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization from Harrington, Maine, began a tradition of placing wreaths on the headstones of our Nation's fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery during the holidays. The national wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in Alexandria, Virginia will be held on Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 12:00 Noon EST. This will be the Wreaths Across America organization's 25th year of laying wreaths at our Nation's cemetery (www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org).

In 2015, Wreaths Across America and its national network of volunteers laid over 900,000 remembrance wreaths in total across the country, 240,815 of which were at Arlington National Cemetery. They were able to include special ceremonies at the Pearl Harbor Memorial, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Wreaths Across America accomplished this with help from nearly 70,000 volunteers at Arlington National Cemetery, with close to a million volunteers participating at 1,108 locations nationwide, and 168 trucking companies and professional drivers helping to deliver the wreaths.

The Wreaths Across America's mission is to Remember, Honor, and Teach. Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve including their families who sacrifice, and Teach our children the cost of the freedoms we enjoy each day. It is our shared belief that... 'The nation which forgets its defenders will soon be forgotten.' - Calvin Coolidge. Remember, Honor and Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December in Arlington, as well as at more than 1,200 veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. For more information, to sponsor a wreath or to sign up to volunteer, please visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org.

This year will be their 10th annual wreath laying ceremony in Pierre. Participants in the South Dakota ceremony are the Board of Directors and members of the South Dakota Funeral Directors Association (SDFDA), Pierre Post 8 American Legion, Pierre VFW Post 2038, Oahe Marine Corps League, Vietnam Era Veterans Association, and the Disabled American Veterans. Featured speaker confirmed at this time will be Major General Tim Reisch, Adjutant General of the South Dakota National Guard; and Chad C. Osthus, President of the South Dakota Funeral Directors Association. The public is encouraged to attend to help pay tribute to fallen soldiers during the Christmas season.

The South Dakota Funeral Directors Association is a professional association that represents the funeral service professionals and the funeral home establishments in the state. The Association provides education, legislative representation and public relations statewide.



MOODY COUNTY VETERANS RECOGNIZED

During the Moody County Veterans Day program, these veterans of the Colman and Egan communities who served in the armed forces during the Berlin and Cuban Crisis era were recognized. Moody County VSO Jim DeLay was one of the heroes recognized.



SDDVA CONTINUES TO RECOGNIZE OUR HEROES

Mike Birnbaum, who sits on the South Dakota Veterans Commission, was honored to present Alvin Glinesman of Rapid City with his Korean Ambassador Peace Medal.

SDDVA continues to work with our County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers and Veterans Service Organization to find these heroes. To date, over 1,000 medals have been presented.



MCDONALD HAS LUNCH WITH SD LEADERS

Bob McDonald, Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, was in Hot Springs yesterday. He toured the Hot Springs VA campus, hosted a town hall meeting and held a luncheon briefing with leaders among the veteran network.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Pollard attended the luncheon briefing and the town hall meeting.

McDonald hopes to hand down a decision by year-end.



VA PARTNERS WITH PROSTATE CANCER FOUNDATION TO EXPAND CLINICAL RESEARCH

As a national leader in oncology advancement and as the largest integrated healthcare system in the nation, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced an important and substantial partnership with the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) to prevent, screen and promote research to speed the development of treatments and cures for prostate cancer among veterans. Announcement of the partnership was made during Launch Pad: Pathways to Cancer Innovation, a joint VA/PCF summit that brings together world-class oncology experts, corporate and nonprofit partners to discuss research, big data, technology and clinical solutions to advance screening, diagnostics and care coordination for cancer and to promote the implementation of best practices across the VA healthcare system.

As part of the summit, PCF announced a \$50-million precision oncology initiative to expand prostate cancer clinical research among veterans to speed the development of new treatment options and cures for prostate cancer patients. The agreement is the first partnership between PCF and the VA, and it comes at a time when an estimated 12,000 veterans each year are diagnosed with prostate cancer, making it the most frequently diagnosed cancer among veterans. In particular, African-Americans are 64 percent more likely to develop prostate cancer compared to any other race or ethnicity and 2.4 times more likely to die from the disease.

"Fighting and treating cancer among our veterans is a team effort, which is why this Launch Pad event and this partnership are so important," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. To effectively serve our veterans and to keep the VA on the cutting edge of medical research, we need government, corporate, and non-profit organizations working together. We are truly grateful to the Prostate Cancer Foundation for this important show of support. Our work together will save veterans' lives."

The goals of the PCF partnership are to increase the number of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) investigators applying to PCF for funding; increase the number of VHA facilities involved in precision medicine/prostate cancer clinical trials; increase the number of Veterans enrolled in studies, providing veteran specimens or data used in studies as well as increase the number of minorities enrolled in PCF studies; and increase the number of early career scientists working on prostate cancer research.

"Our goal is to increase our scientific understanding of prostate cancer among veterans and to kick-start the development of precision medicine treatments for them, as well as the general population," said Jonathan W. Simons, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, PCF. "This agreement will open new doors for the research community to work with veterans facing a life threatening disease and ultimately reduce the disease burden on America's veterans."

The VA has a long history in cancer prevention and research. The VA's cancer research portfolio supported 262 active projects with \$53.5 million in fiscal year 2016, toward understanding and preventing cancers prevalent in the veteran population. In addition, the VA research also has ongoing collaborations and data-sharing with other public agencies, and profit and non-profit corporations to enhance cancer research, including studies that support the national Precision Medicine Initiative.

For more information about the Launch Pad event, visit XX. For more information about VA research, including cancer innovations, visit <http://www.research.va.gov/>.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—Hot Springs (Lower Level Conference Room)—10:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)
Dec. 6—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Dec. 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre—10:00 am—3:00 pm—(CT)
Dec. 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—VFW (209 Cedar Street) Yankton—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
Dec. 12—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony—Flaming Fountain—Capitol Lake—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
Dec. 14—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls DAV—12:00 noon (CT)
Dec. 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American legion—12:00 noon (CT)
Dec. 17—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW—10:00 am (MT)

2017

Jan. 10 - Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan. 11—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—5:00 pm—8:00 pm (CT)
Jan. 30—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre
Feb. 1—American Legion Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8 Cabin—Pierre (520 S. Pierre Street) - 5:30 pm (CT)
Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)
Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown

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